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# Track'n Your Savings Goals

By Marsha A. Goetting, Ph.D., CFP®, CFCS, Extension Family Economics Specialist; and Corinne Cramer, Lake County Extension Family and Consumer Sciences Agent

This MontGuide illustrates a technique to help you track progress towards achieving your family and personal savings goals.

**W**hat are you saving for? *New furniture? A car or truck? A house? A family vacation? When will you need the money? Next month? Next summer? Next year? When the kids go to college? At retirement?* Building up savings for these types of goals isn't easy—it takes a lot of effort to decide on a savings plan and stick with it. This MontGuide shows you how to use an innovative technique to track progress towards achieving your family and personal savings goals.

## Savings register

Many of us have had savings accounts since childhood. But few of us have had separate saving accounts for *each* of our savings goals. The *Track'n Your Savings Goals* register shows you how to track progress towards achieving specific savings goals—all in *one* place. At any point in time you can see the amount you have accumulated towards *each* goal. It's designed for those who want a simple way to track their savings without having to spend a lot of time and hassle doing it.

These savings registers and this MontGuide are made available at no charge for Montana residents through gifts from the First Interstate BancSystem Foundation and the Montana Credit Unions for

## Savings Goals (example)

Fix-It	Get-Away	Vehicle	College	Gifts	Retirement
Car Repair	Vacation	Truck	Tuition	Birthday	Travel
Appliance	Summer	Automobile	Books	Baby	Living
Repairs	Winter	Motorcycle	Room/Board	Holidays	Expenses
Remodeling	Weekend	Snowmobile	Computer	Anniversaries	
		Bicycle	Supplies	Wedding	

Fig. 1. Savings goals

Community Development. The charge for out-of-state residents is \$2.00 (*Ordering information, Page 4*).

## Advantages of the "Track'n" savings register

The *Track'n Your Savings Goals* register is simple. It's also compact, so you can carry it with you at all times. Since it's small enough to slip into your check register, you can refer to it at any time. It keeps information at your fingertips about the progress you are making towards your savings goals. And, it provides you with immediate decision-making opportunities:

*"Yes, I could spend that \$100 on fancy sneakers or I could buy cheaper ones and put the \$50 difference towards our goal of a family vacation next summer."*

## Getting started—Decide on your savings goals (fig. 1)

You can decide upon savings goals as an individual or as a family. The decision of *what to save for* and *how*

*much to save* is an important part of the personal and family financial planning process. Encourage each family member to have a separate *Track'n Your Savings Goals* register so he/she can track progress towards achieving *individual* savings goals. Then, establish another register for tracking progress towards achieving *family* savings goals.

Your first step is to decide on your savings goals. Don't get carried away listing too many goals, start with three to five. Examples of goals and items included under those goals are shown in figure 1 and on page 1 of the *Track'n Your Savings Goals* register.

Once you have decided on your financial goals, write them in the appropriate boxes on pages 2 and 5 of your register (figs. 1 and 3).

## Deciding the amount needed (fig. 2)

After you decide what you want to save for, the next step is to record the amount of money you will need to accomplish each savings goal.

**Fig. 2.**  
Deciding  
on amount  
needed

My Savings Goals					
<b>Write Goals Here ----&gt;</b>	<i>Fix-it</i>	<i>Vacation</i>	<i>Car</i>	<i>College</i>	<i>Retire</i>
<b>Date Needed</b>	2003	2004	2005	2021	
<b>\$ Needed</b>	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,000	\$ 2,000	\$ ???	\$ ???
<b>\$ Already Saved</b>	- 0.00	- 0.00	- 0.00	- 0.00	- 0.00
<b>\$ Still Needed</b>	= 1,000	= 1,000	= 2,000	= ???	= ???
<i>Write the amount still needed for each goal on the top of the first register page</i>					

**Fig. 3.**  
Savings  
register  
example

<b>Total \$ Needed</b>	<i>Fix-it</i>		<i>Vacation</i>		<i>Car</i>		<i>College</i>		<i>Retirement</i>		<b>Savings Balance</b>
\$4,000											
<b>Description/Date</b>	\$ 1,000	00	\$ 1,000	00	\$ 2,000	00	\$ 0 00		\$ 0 00		\$ 0 00

### Goals (fig. 2)

- Write your goals at the top of the columns on pages 2 and 5 of the register.

### Date Needed (fig. 2)

- Write the date when you need the money for each goal.

### \$ Needed (fig. 2)

- Write the amount needed to achieve your goal on the third line—*\$ needed*.

### Amount Already Saved (fig. 2)

- Write the amount you have already saved on the fourth line—*\$ already saved*.

### Amount Still Needed (fig. 2)

- To determine the amount still needed, subtract the amount already saved from the \$ needed. The result is the amount *still needed* to achieve each of your savings goals.

## How to start using the savings register

To begin using the savings register, first record your savings goals in the spaces provided at the top of page 5 in the register.

### Savings amount needed (fig. 3)

- Write in the amount you need for **each** goal under the appropriate column on page 5 of your register.
- If you don't know the amount, just leave a blank or write a zero in each column.
- In the far left column, under **total \$ needed**, write the total amount

of the savings needed for the goals you have listed.

### Savings Balance (fig. 3)

- Write in the amount you have in your savings on the **Savings Balance** column (far right) on p. 5 of the register.
- If you want to start with a zero balance and watch your savings grow, that's fine. This system is flexible to meet your needs.

### Description/Date (fig. 3)

- Write a note under **description** to remind you of the type of transaction (deposit or withdrawal) and the date the deposit or withdrawal occurred.

## Recording a savings deposit

In cases where you want to devote the entire deposit to one goal, you would follow these steps.

### Description/Date (fig. 4)

Under **Description/Date**, write a note to remind you of the type of transaction and the date.

- On January 11, an automatic deposit of \$50 was made from the checking account to the savings account.
- On January 29, a deposit of \$75 was made from a paycheck.

### Deposit amount under appropriate goal (fig. 4)

Write the amount of the deposit under the appropriate goal.

- This saver had automatic deposits of \$50 and \$75 that were recorded in the fix-it savings goal column.

### Goal balances (fig. 4)

On the gray line, add the deposit to the figure in the goal column to reveal the balance.

- On January 11, \$50 is the balance in the fix-it column because it's the first entry made.
- On January 29, the balance in the fix-it column is \$125 because a \$75 deposit was made ( $\$75 + \$50 = \$125$ ).

### Savings Balance (fig. 4)

Write the deposit in the **Savings Balance** column, and then add it to the previous balance to keep a running total in the savings account.

- On January 11, the savings account balance is \$50 because this amount was the first deposit.
- On January 29, the savings account balance increases to \$125 because of the \$75 deposit ( $\$75 + \$50 = \$125$ ).

## Splitting a deposit between savings goals

You can use the savings register to split one deposit between two or more goals.

### Description/Date (fig. 5)

Write a note to remind you of the type of deposit and the date it occurred.

**Fig. 4.**  
Recording  
a savings  
deposit

Total \$ Needed		Fix-it		Vacation		Car		College		Retirement		Savings Balance	
\$3,900													
Description/Date		\$ 1,000	00	\$ 900	00	\$ 2,000	00	\$ 0	00	\$ 0	00	\$ 0	00
Auto Dep	1/11	+ 50	00	00	00	00	00					+50	00
Balance		50	00									50	00
Paycheck	1/29	+ 75	00									+75	00
Balance		125	00									125	00

**Fig. 5.**  
Recording  
a deposit  
that is split  
among  
goals

Total \$ Needed		Fix-it		Vacation		Car		College		Retirement		Savings Balance	
\$3,900													
Description/Date		\$ 1,000	00	\$ 900	00	\$ 2,000	00	\$ 0	00	\$ 0	00	\$ 0	00
Auto Dep	1/11	+ 50	00	00	00	00	00					+50	00
Balance		50	00									50	00
Paycheck	1/29	+ 75	00	+55	00	+20	00					+150	00
Balance		125	00	55	00	20	00					200	00

**Fig. 6.**  
Recording  
a savings  
withdrawal

Total \$ Needed		Fix-it		Vacation		Car		College		Retirement		Savings Balance	
\$3,900													
Description/Date		\$ 1,000	00	\$ 900	00	\$ 2,000	00	\$ 0	00	\$ 0	00	\$ 0	00
Auto Dep	1/11	+ 50	00	00	00	00	00					+50	00
Balance		50	00									50	00
Paycheck	1/29	+ 75	00	+55	00	+20	00					+150	00
Balance		125	00	55	00	20	00					200	00
Withdrawal	2/25	-80	00									-80	00
Balance		45	00									120	00

- On January 29, a deposit from a paycheck was made for \$150.

**Deposit amounts under appropriate goals (fig. 5)**

A deposit can be split and recorded in more than one goal column. Write the amount deposited under each goal.

- This saver decided to split a \$150 deposit among three goals: \$75 for fix-it, \$55 for vacation, and \$20 for a down payment on a new car.

**Goal balances (fig. 5)**

Write the balances under each goal after adding the most recent deposit to the prior balances.

- This saver now has the following amounts in her savings goals: \$125 in *fix-it* (\$50 + \$75), \$55 in *vacation*, and \$20 in *car*.

**Saving balance (fig. 5)**

Add the most recent deposit to the previous balance.

- This saver added \$150 to the previous balance of \$50, which raised her total savings balance to \$200.

**Recording a savings withdrawal**

When you make a withdrawal, update the goal columns according to how the money will be spent.

**Description and date of withdrawal (fig. 6)**

Write a note to remind you of the withdrawal from your savings account.

- On February 25, a withdrawal of \$80 was made for car repair.

**Goal withdrawal (fig. 6)**

Record the amount withdrawn under the appropriate goal.

- This saver withdrew \$80 from her fix-it goal to repair a window.

**Goal balances (fig. 6)**

On the gray shaded line, the balance is recorded after the withdrawal is made.

- After the \$80 withdrawal, \$45 remains in the fix-it savings column (\$125 - \$80 = \$45).

**Savings balance (fig. 6)**

On the far right, the withdrawal is subtracted from the previous savings balance to show the new savings account balance.

- \$80 is subtracted from the savings balance of \$200. The new savings account balance is \$120 (\$200 - \$80 = \$120).

## Check Register Tracking System

A companion tracking method, "Using a Check Register to Track your Expenses," can help you evaluate your spending habits so you can find more money for achieving your savings goals.

While the check register was initially developed for those who write checks, many Montanans have adapted it to track their cash, credit card and debit card expenses.

Once individuals and families know where their money is going they can use the information to make decisions about their spending habits. They can discover areas where expenses can be adjusted so they will have more money to reach their savings goals.

The cost per check register is \$1.00 for Montana residents and \$2.00 for out-of-state residents. One register will last most people from two to three months, depending on how many checks you write.

To receive a Check Register, send a check payable to MSU Extension Service or to your County or Reservation Extension Office or to the address listed under *Order From*.

### Summary

For many Montana families, financial security means they have money in the bank. With savings to fall back on, they know they can handle unexpected expenses. The *Track'n Your Savings Goals Savings Register* is designed to help you track progress towards achieving your goals and start on the road to financial security in later life.

### Acknowledgement

*Track'n Your Savings Goals* registers are made available at no charge for Montana residents through gifts from the First Interstate BancSystem Foundation and the Montana Credit Unions for Community Development. The charge for out-of-state residents is \$2.00.

## Ordering Savings and Check Registers

- *Track'n Your Savings Goals*  
Montana Residents: Free  
Out of State Residents: \$2.00\*

- *MSU Check Register Tracking System*  
Montana Residents: \$1.00\*  
Out of State Residents: \$2.00\*

\*Cost includes shipping and handling.  
Make check payable to MSU Extension.

### Order From:

Registers  
Extension Publications  
P.O. Box 172040  
Montana State University  
Bozeman, MT 59717

Credit card orders—  
Call (406) 994-3273.



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